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PelhamNEWS

Investing in students



MICHELLE ALLENBERG/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Niagara College guest speaker Paul Charette, chair of the board of directors of Bird Construction, donated \$250,000 toward a new scholarship fund. See story on Page 9.

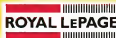


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UPFRONT

Liver donor 'feels good on the inside'

CHERYL CLOCK
Postmedia Network

It's been five months since they last saw each other in hospital.

Five months since each of their lives was forever changed.

On this day, the two women, who were strangers before their lives became forever connected, met each other to talk about the transplant that saved one life, and deeply enriched another.

They hugged. Cried. And talked about the journey that began last November when 45-year-old Leanne Becevel of Niagara Falls read a story in *The Standard* about Jane Villeneuve's search for a liver donor.



CHERYL CLOCK/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

After reading a story about Jane Villeneuve's need for a liver last November, Leanne Becevel, right, stepped forward. She donated a piece of her liver to Jane in January. On this day, they met for the first time since the operation.

Continued on Page 12

Police board makes Uber legal

BILL SAWCHUK
Postmedia Network

Uber will be legal in Niagara starting July 1.

That is one of a number of changes the Niagara police services board adopted during its monthly meeting last Thursday.

The board also made it legal for taxis to operate anywhere in the region. Previously they could only operate in the municipality where their licence was issued.

"The police board had to make some very tough decisions," said Hanif Patni, CEO of Coventry Connections, which owns Centra

Taxi and is one of the largest operators in Canada.

"They had to skirt between wanting the new ride-sharing economy to operate and, at the same time, make sure it is safe and consumers are protected."

Patni said he is confident his company can compete under the new regulations, and it has invested heavily in its Niagara operations.

"People are noticing," he said. "They know when you enter a taxi it is a safe place to be. It has a predictable price — there is no surge pricing."

"We have done a lot. We have gone to hybrids. We

have gone to point-of-sale devices. We have gone to apps. We have improved our code of conduct, and our drivers are permanent. Uber drivers come and go. Our taxis also have cameras and safety measures that there is no way Uber will have."

Uber customers use a mobile app to request a ride, set a pickup and drop off location, and get a cost estimate before confirming the request. Drivers use their own vehicles.

Uber Canada spokesperson Susie Heath commended board chair Bob Gale and the police services board for their work to update ground transporta-

tion regulations in Niagara. She also thanked regional Coun. Andy Petrowski, who she said was instrumental and dedicated to bringing ride-sharing to Niagara.

"We will be reviewing the bylaw in depth and speaking with local officials to further understand how the regulations may be implemented, and will have more to say in the coming days," she said.

Gale said the objective of the new regulations is to ensure drivers and vehicles in both the ride-sharing and taxi industries are safe and adequately insured.

bsawchuk@postmedia.com

CHANGES TO RIDE-FOR-HIRE

- All TNC drivers and vehicles have provincially approved insurance
- TNC drivers must have background checks and vehicle safety requirements identical to those applied to taxi drivers and taxi cabs
- There will be no quotas on TNC drivers or vehicles.
- The minimum fare is restricted to \$3.75 per trip for TNC arranged rides.
- TNC vehicles required to have identification as a TNC vehicle
- TNCs to be subject to extensive record maintenance and production requirements
- Licensing fees to be charged to TNCs to include a flat fee, and a per trip charge, all with a view to making the administration and enforcement of the TNC provisions cost recovery in addition, changes approved respecting the existing taxi industry, include:
 - Maintenance of taxi cab quotas, with the proviso that the issue of quotas is to be reviewed in one year
 - Taxicab licences, although issued on a per area municipality basis, may be utilized regionwide to be reviewed in one year
 - Identical TNC fare provisions referenced above in respect of taxi rides dispatched in a manner similar to a TNC

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LOCAL NEWS

Loan request OK'd for Pelham multi-use centre

MARYANNE FIRTH
Postmedia Network

Despite resident concerns over the financing of the project, Niagara Region has endorsed Pelham's \$36.2-million loan for its new multi-use community centre.

Approval was sought by the town to authorize debenture of the full estimated cost of the project, which includes a twin-pad arena with 1,000 seats, adaptable community spaces, a double gymnasium and indoor walking track.

The intention, however, is to use other funding sources to lessen the amount that Pelham ultimately needs to borrow, Mayor Dave Augustyn told councillors during last Wednesday's corporate services meeting.

The full debenture was authorized in order to "lock-in" low interest rates currently being offered by Infrastructure Ontario, he said.

"We want to lock in that rate to be fiscally prudent."

The anticipated cost breakdown includes a \$9.1-million debenture in 2016 and a \$12.1-million debenture in 2017 — the latter of which is expected to be recouped, including interest, through development charges, Augustyn said.

Remaining funds will be paid for through \$12 million from the sale of land owned by the town and \$3 million in fundraising.

Pelham has received a "conservative appraisal" for the property it intends to sell, Augustyn said.

Grants are also being sought from the federal and provincial governments.

The total project price was determined through a cost analysis, which included a "line by line review of the design," with multiple quotes sought for each major line item, Augustyn said.

"We're very confident on that amount."

In a presentation to committee, lifelong Pelham resident Curt Harley questioned the town's ability to afford the

multimillion-dollar facility.

After listing his extensive background in the architecture and construction sectors, he explained his concerns regarding the project's finances and his fears the cost would ultimately fall on the backs of taxpayers.

He felt contradictory information was being provided to the public with no clear outline of where the funds to support the centre would be coming from and when they would be available.

Harley, joined by about a dozen residents in the gallery, asked committee to defer the issue in order to take a closer look at the debenture request before giving it the green light.

"This is a major undertaking that can't be rubber stamped through the political process."

A deferral motion was made but defeated.

The discussion led to questions from councillors about the debt ceiling in place for each municipality — both self-imposed and provincially-mandated — as well as the authority of regional council to deny a municipal request of this nature.

Niagara's municipalities do not have the ability to apply for debentures on their own. Approval must first be received by the Region in order to proceed.

Legislation requires the Region to approve municipal debenture requests that have met all criteria set out by the province, acting chief administrative officer Mo Lewis said.

Pelham has exhibited its ability to pay for the debenture and will remain within its annual debt repayment limits also specified by the province, he said.

He said the town is "being conservative" by authorizing a loan for the full amount of the project, regardless of whether it's needed.

If the full \$36.2 million is borrowed, Pelham's annual debt repayment will be at 23.2 per cent. The provincially-mandated annual limit is 25 per cent.

Asked whether he had approached upper levels of government about his concerns, Harley said he had not reached out to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, but that a "process is moving forward" with regards to contacting the Ontario ombudsman.

St. Catharines Coun. Andy Petrowski was worried there was nothing preventing the municipality from debenturing the full amount and putting the burden on taxpayers.

"There's nothing preventing them from putting this millstone around the necks of residents for the next 30 years," he said.

Welland Mayor Frank Campion said it is not regional council's role to judge process and affordability of municipalities.

"It's not our decision to determine how much Pelham can pay. If it meets the criteria, which is does, we can't say much about that."

Grimsey Coun. Tony Quirk

said it would be "precedent setting" for the Region to halt Pelham's plans, as council does not traditionally "second guess" the funding requested by lower-tier municipalities.

Augustyn said Pelham is within all the guidelines required by the province to request the debenture for the project.

"We are ready to proceed," he said. "We're ready to put shovels in the ground in late August, early September."

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Happy Canada Day, Pelham

MAYOR DAVE AUGUSTYN

Canada Day 2016 in Pelham is our opportunity to gather with family and friends and to proudly celebrate all it means to be Canadian and to live in our great community.

This year, volunteers have worked with town staff and sponsors to put together a fabulous celebration.

Thanks to the Rotary Club of Fonthill and District for organizing amazing children's activities from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Harold Black Park. Expect bouncy castles and activities, hands-on games and activities, and face painting.

On your way to and from the park, check

out the Grand Parade on Hald Street, starting at 1 p.m. from A.K. Wigg School to the Park. Don't forget to wear your favourite red and white shirts and hats to show off your Canadian pride.

Watch out for the Pelham firefighters, armed with water. Or grab some candy and Canadian flags from other parade participants. Join us for the opening ceremonies at about 2 p.m. at the flag pole at Harold Black for the singing of the national anthem and the cutting of the gigantic, free Canada Day birthday cake (thanks to Fonthill Sobey's).

In addition to great food and music sponsored by Niagara Peninsula Energy, and Sawmill Golf Course, join in other activities at Harold Black Park, including: Knights of

Columbus Soccer Challenge at 2:30 p.m.,outine eating contest at 4 p.m., sponsored by the Fonthill Lions Club, or watch the Krusher BMX Stunt Team at 5:30 p.m. and 7 p.m. And don't forget about the amazing fireworks at 10:15 p.m., sponsored by the Fonthill Volunteer Firefighters Association.

Or if you want to "chill" at Peace Park in Downtown Fonthill instead, join in for free Canada Day Birthday Cake at 2:20 p.m. and musical entertainment by Honest Frankie from 2:30 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Finally, don't forget about the free shuttles running noon to midnight (except during the parade between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.) throughout the entire Town.

Special thanks to the Government of

Canada through the Department of Canadian Heritage for additional funding and support.

You and I are also blessed to have so many of our neighbours and businesses working to make our town a prosperous, vibrant and caring community. I continue to marvel at the work and dedication of so many generous volunteers who form the foundation of our vibrant community throughout the year, not just on Canada Day.

As you and your family and friends commemorate our country's 149th Birthday, I hope you will join me in celebrating and giving thanks for Pelham and for Canada.

You may contact Mayor Dave at majordave@pelham.ca or read past columns at www.pelhammayordave.blogspot.com.

Region faces real test on Ontario Works



GRANT
LAFLECHE

Niagara has a problem. It is not an issue that can be ignored, and there is no quick or easy solution to it.

It also represents a serious test for a regional council that is better known for self-interested squabbling over procedure than getting the public's work accomplished.

Now it has an opportunity to prove it is worthy of the trust the public placed in it on election day.

At the moment, Niagara Region faces a \$1.3 million Ontario Works shortfall.

The Region had budgeted \$6.2 million for Ontario Works items, called "discretionary programs," like assistance with medical and dental costs, housing and energy bills.

That budget is funded almost entirely by the provincial government, with the Region chipping in an increasingly smaller amount due to upslugging by Queen's Park.

There are currently some 23,000 Niagara residents on Ontario Works. That is a figure that should give you some degree of pause, given that Niagara has a total population of about 430,000. Demand from these citizens for Ontario Works discretionary programming has effectively doubled the bank.

The core payout of Ontario Works — unemployment and disability payments — isn't any



POSTMEDIA NETWORK FILE PHOTO

Regional council faces a test in how it will handle a shortfall in Ontario Works funding.

where near enough to get by on. A person living on social assistance receives only \$679 a month, for instance.

As a result of these paltry sums, those on assistance have come to rely on the discretionary programs — so called because they are not mandatory but at the discretion of the Region and determined on a case-by-case basis — to make ends meet.

The problem is the provincial funding formula is woefully inadequate.

A region will receive a maximum of \$10 per case, per month (there may be multiple people within a single case file). The regional government can then top up the discretionary spending depending on the need.

Demand has grown, and as a result the Region finds itself shorting at a \$1.3 million social assistance shortfall, for which it has no contingency fund to cover.

How, then, to make up the difference?

The Region can either cut services, take money from elsewhere in the budget, or raise taxes.

Cutting services would be a colossal and cruel mistake. About 23,000 of our neighbours depend on the discretionary programs to ensure they stay in a home, or get critical medical care like dental work.

Slashing the small portion of the Ontario Works budget actually provided by the Region is only going to make life harder for those already living on the margins.

We know that when services are cut, helping lift people out of poverty in the long term becomes exponentially more difficult. And it will put more weight on the shoulders of local agencies and charities, which are already struggling to meet demand.

Only the most capricious of councillors could see cutting services to our most vulnerable population as a viable alternative.

Still, the money has to come from somewhere. Raising the tax levy is the easiest way to do it, although one that is not politically palatable to many Niagara residents nor for a council composed of men and women who mistakenly believe their job is to spend as little of the public's money as possible, when their real task is to spend it wisely.

That said, there are limits to how much the public can pay, particularly in an environment where costs for everything from road repairs to health care climb every year.

Council's first step should be to look to other programs for possible savings.

The Ontario government has been uploading costs for many services in the past few years, including Ontario Works. In fact, a significant recent regional council was able to pass a zero-increase budget this year was that upslugging.

Continued on next page

COMMENT

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE BY THE NUMBERS

Approximately 23,000 Niagara residents receive social assistance through the Region.

The total regional budget for social assistance is \$6.2 million, most of which is provided by the provincial government. The Region faces a shortfall of about \$1.3 million.

So far this year, the Region has issued:

■ 11,800 cheques at an average of \$349 each for

discretionary benefits covering items like dental work or mobility devices.

■ 6,748 cheques at an average of \$474 through the housing stability program, which helps keep people housed.

■ 1,502 cheques at an average of \$480 through the regional emergency energy program to help low-income residents, including but not limited to those on social assistance, pay their energy bills.

From previous page

On the social assistance side of things, provincial uploading saved the Region \$2.7 million, more than enough to cover the current shortfall. However, that money was allocated to other programs during the budget process, but it does demonstrate there is money that can be found when 2017 budget deliberations get underway in a few months. This will mean directing funds to social assistance

and away from other programs. That will be an onerous task for council.

Long term, what Niagara and many other Ontario communities need is a change in the provincial funding formula that better addresses our economic reality.

In the here and now, however, Niagara politicians need to do what they can to ensure thousands of citizens don't end up on the streets with a mouthful

of rotten teeth. This means many councillors will have to abandon the immature ideological notion that a zero per cent budget is a high-water mark of accomplishment. It is not.

Meeting the needs of the community is what they were elected to do, and sometimes that costs money.

The crisis this council has

faced to date have been of their own making, the result of ingighting, self-aggrandizing and shallow politics. Now it faces a problem of real substance.

What mettle it shows in dealing with it will speak volumes about their political competence.

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LOCAL NEWS

Region faces OW shortfall of more than \$1 million

MARYANNE FIRTH
Postmedia Network

Niagara has a more than \$1-million problem.

Demand for social assistance benefits in the community is expected to exceed available funding by \$1.3 million for 2016 — a trend that will continue if action is not taken.

That was the message brought forward by Niagara Region's acting community services commissioner Adrienne Jugley to last Tuesday's public health and social services committee, where she outlined the need for a solution.

A review will be conducted to determine possible options to address the funding gap, including areas where benefits and programs could be potentially be reduced or eliminated.

The review will include the Housing Stability Plan program, which supports homelessness prevention by pro-

viding assistance with first and last month's rent, rent arrears and moving costs; Niagara Emergency Energy Fund (NEEF), which assists with gas and hydro arrears; and reconnection fees; and Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program discretionary benefits.

Those benefits include items such as dental services, funerals and burials, vision care, medical supplies, prosthetics and household necessities such as beds and major appliances. Also included is funding to ODSP clients to assist with housing-related costs such as rent arrears and utility cutoffs.

"They help pay for things that support client health and safety and that help people find or retain a place to live," Jugley said. "Obviously these things are also important to the employability of our clients, which is a key goal for our program

and a focus of our work."

Before the end of the year, the Region's social assistance and employment opportunities division is anticipating demand in those three program areas to exceed the \$6-million budget by \$1.3 million.

Part of the issue, Jugley said, is low social assistance rates, which offer \$670 per month to a single person and less than \$1,200 a month for a family of four.

The lack of funding pushes clients to rely on those discretionary benefits to get by, she said.

The budgeted funds are primarily provided by the province with Niagara chipping in about \$132,000 for discretionary benefits and \$650,000 for NEER.

The issue, one being faced by many Ontario communities, is partially rooted in policy and program changes introduced by the province since 2012, including can-

cellation of the community start-up and maintenance benefit, Jugley said.

"That program had gone a long way in helping clients and other low-income residents with urgent housing and other needs," she said.

Prior to that time, there was no cap on benefits, she added, which meant benefits that were needed were always received.

A provincially-mandated cap has since been put in place limiting discretionary benefits to \$10 per month for each social assistance case, regardless of how many individuals are included under a single file.

Niagara's current OW caseload includes more than 11,000 files representing about 23,000 people.

The regional division has worked to absorb past shortfalls, offsetting costs through "under expenditures in other OW allowances and benefits," Jugley said.

But by 2018, OW benefits will be 100 per cent funded by the province and current levy funding may no longer be available to offset those overages — unless council chooses to directly address the issue, she added.

"Unfortunately, the changes that were made at the province and the ones we live with now are putting pressure on the services where we help people who are in crisis," Jugley said.

"What's important to know is that if we reduce or eliminate many of the benefits we currently provide, clients will likely not have other options. We are being told, even now, that the community agencies simply don't have the resources to help us."

Options staff are reviewing as possible solutions include advocating for the province to increase the \$10 cap and to increase ODSP funding; eliminating or reducing benefits to stay within the budget and the provincial cap; or continuing to use funds within the regional tax levy to support current benefits, even after the provincial upholding has been completed.

"Our analysis will include a full understanding of the impact of recommended options, including potential negative risks to clients, increased demand on outside service agencies, or even potential decreased funding that support agencies," Jugley said.

St. Catharines Coun. Brian Heit recommended staff rank the benefits in order



BRIAN HEIT

of importance to help council determine where reductions or cuts could potentially be made.

Heit asked for review of the funeral and burial costs in particular to outline whether cost saving measures were available.

Jugley said staff will likely return to council with a "combination of strategies" to address the issue.

"It will be up to council how much they want to strip back."

The province is in the process of progressively uploading the cost of discretionary benefits.

"Every year the (regional) levy amount that is required is less and less," Jugley said, adding over the past few years those freed-up dollars have been allocated for other purposes during the budget process.

In 2016, that accounted for \$2.7 million — more than enough to address the increasing demand for benefits.

It will be at council's discretion, Jugley said, whether those dollars will be used in the future to help ease that pressure.

The staff report outlining future options is scheduled to be presented to council in September.

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1:00 pm Grand Parade from A.K. Wlog School to Harold Black Park
2:00 pm Opening Ceremonies & singing of the National Anthem
2:20 pm Free Birthday Cake, while quantities last
2:30 pm Live music & entertainment in the tent (until 10:15 pm)
4:00 pm Knights of Columbus Soccer Challenge
5:30 pm Routine Tasting Contest sponsored by the Fonthill Lions Club
7:00 pm Krusher BMX Stunt Team
7:00 pm Krusher BMX Stunt Team
10:15 pm Fireworks

Take part in the **FUN at PEACE PARK**
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Pelham Town Council wishes you and your family a very Happy Canada Day!

We extend our sincere appreciation to the volunteers, businesses and staff who have contributed to this year's Canada Day celebrations.

We hope that you will join us at Harold Black Park and Peace Park on Friday, July 1, 2016 to celebrate our nation and our vibrant, creative and caring community.

Have a safe and enjoyable holiday!



IN BRIEF

Pelham asking DSBN for consideration of E.W. Farr name change

Pelham town council last Monday approved a site plan agreement with District School Board of Niagara for construction of an addition to E.W. Farr Memorial School. The one-storey addition, to the west side of the school, will double the size of E.W. Farr. The new kindergarten to Grade 3 school will be able to handle a kindergarten to Grade 8

program in Ferwick. Once completed, the school board plans to close Pelham Centre Public School, Farr's Grades 4 to Grade 8 sister school.

The expanded Farr school will include a larger parking lot with entrance and exit remaining off Alsop Avenue, said planning director Barbara Wiens. Part of the playground area can be shared with the town.

Meanwhile, town council will send a letter to the school board suggesting it reconsider a decision to rename the school Wellington Heights. The town says E.W. Farr was a major education figure in Pelham.

Traditionally, Pelham public schools have been named after local educators or school board leaders including E.L. Crossley, A.K. Wigg and Glynn A. Green as well as E.W. Farr.

Niagara central airport upgrades taking off
Last Monday Pelham approved debentures for work

at Niagara Central Dorothy Runge Airport.

They include \$200,000 for hangar roof repairs, \$150,000 for a new septic system, \$10,000 for taxiway repairs, \$13,500 to update its land use plan and \$3,000 for new signage.

The airport has received a federal grant for up to \$99,000 for hangar roof repairs.

Pelham is a co-owner of the airport with Port Colborne, Welland and Wainfleet, who will share responsibility for the debenture. Any debt falls on the airport commission.

Ward 3 Coun. Peter Papp said the improvements will enhance the value of the airport as a transportation asset to south Niagara and the region.

Town bidding for two Canada 150 grants

Pelham will apply to Ottawa for two Canada 150th anniversary grants to renovate the town's swimming pool and to build an outdoor theatre in

east Fonthill.

Under the Canada 150 Community Infrastructure Program, the town seeks 50 per cent funding for a \$350,000 renovation of the swimming pool in Marlene Stewart Street Park. The work would repair the pool bowl and replace the deck with a non-slip surface and include new lighting panel, an accessibility entry lift and repairs to weeping tile.

The second project, under the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund, would include some funding for a \$5.2-million outdoor theatre on hectare of land beside the multi-purpose community centre in East Fonthill.

It would include a stage, outdoor ice rink, removable seating, art display area, storage shelter and streetscaping.

Treasurer Carl Pupo said last Monday the new federal grants program would not consider Pelham's community centre project eligible under the terms of the grants.

The town does have a swimming pool renovation and an outdoor theatre in east Fonthill on its list of projects for the next five to 10 years.

The grant programs provide an opportunity for funds now, she said.

The projects must be completed by March 2018.

The town will have to borrow money to cover its share of construction costs if its bids are accepted.

She said the town is waiting for the provincial government to announce its infrastructure programs. They may cover some costs for the work.

Pelham transit rolls out summer schedule

Pelham Transit will bring in a summer schedule.

The town's one-bus system will shift its services to connect seniors, children off school, and other residents to in-town shopping and summer programs.

In addition to connections with neighbouring municipal and regional bus services, Pelham Transit stop at town parks, the arena, Sobeys, the Fonthill plaza and senior residence complexes.

Recreation director Vickie van Ravenswaay said the schedules will be posted on the town's website www.pelham.ca by the end of the week.

She said the town is working with federal and provincial governments to obtain gasoline tax funds to keep the service running after

2017.

Currently, the rural transit service is funded by the Ontario government as a two-year pilot project testing transit services in a small communities. Pelham Transit ends its first year of regularly scheduled service plus a specialty service in September.

Hunt on for regional CIP record in Pelham

Pelham staff will review the town's community improvement grant records to find out if downtown Fonthill businesses have received any CIP grants from Niagara Region.

Ward 2 Coun. Gary Accursi said he does not know if regional CIP money has come to Pelham.

The town pays up to \$12,500 to downtown business property owners who improve front, side or rear facades to polish the look of their buildings. The Region has a similar CIP program, which encourages upgrades.

Planning director Barbara Wiens said last Monday the town pays the grant after the property owner has completed and paid for their work.

Any regional money would come through the town to an applicant. The amount would depend on how much the Region has in its CIP fund at the time.

Accursi said the Region should lay out how its CIP funds are distributed across the region.



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LOCAL NEWS

College gets new scholarship fund

MICHELLE ALLENBERG
Postmedia Network

Niagara College's graduation ceremony last Friday was one to remember with the announcement of a new scholarship.

Last Friday's convocation guest speaker Paul Charette, chair of the board of directors of Bird Construction, announced a \$250,000 donation from him and his wife Geri. The donation will go toward an endowed scholarship which will support those studying in the construction technology division. It will be an ongoing fund known as the Geri and Paul Charette Endowed Scholarship Fund.

Niagara College president Dan Patterson said the school would match Charette's

donation. Patterson said an announcement of this magnitude has never been done at any of the college's convocations.

"It's very exciting, especially when it comes from a person who works so hard and knows what it is to be successful. So this is very powerful and our students, faculty and audience gave him a standing ovation. It was very spontaneous and from the heart," Patterson said.

During the convocation Charette spoke about his difficult childhood, living with an alcoholic father, and the obstacles he had to overcome. When he was finished high school he received a scholarship for \$250 which allowed him to pursue post secondary education.



MICHELLE ALLENBERG/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Charette received a diploma in civil technology from Red River College in Manitoba. After graduating in 1967 he joined Crippen Acres Engineering as an engineer technician working in Manitoba. He later joined Bird Construction Co. Ltd. as a project coordinator, eventually becoming chief executive officer in 1991.

In 2001 he joined the company's board of directors. "Every young person in Canada should at least be given the opportunity to get

a post-secondary education. I really think education is the key to a successful life. Without an education I don't think you can fulfill your potential," Charette said.

For Charette, what really resonates is if he hadn't

received money to attend college 51 years ago he wouldn't be where he is today. This has made giving back an integral part of who he is.

"I think it is important that we continue that cycle," Charette said.

Patterson said this scholarship really is about supporting the community by helping people who might not have had the opportunity to attend post secondary school.

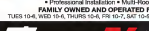
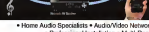
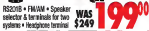
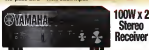
"It is a fitting legacy. It will help students who need the financial support like he did a long time ago. So that connection is just resonated throughout the thousand plus people that we had celebrating convocation with us," Patterson said.

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LAURA BARTON/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Grade 7 French immersion student Megan Bartley, in grey, served coffee and food with classmate Brenda Bohun and Grade 6 French immersion student Jonathan Graves to fellow students, staff and guests of the presentation designating McKay Public School the first fair trade school in the province.

McKay first fair trade school in province

LAURA BARTON
 Postmedia Network

McKay Public School in Port Colborne is stepping up for fairness.

Last Wednesday, the school received the designation of being Ontario's first fair trade school. This means its staff and students support people being paid fairly for their work and not being forced to work in sweat shops where they earn little and even risk their lives.

Port Colborne deputy mayor John Mayne remarked how it means McKay is the first out of 3,977 elementary schools across the province to take this step.

"That's something to really be proud of," he said.

Jenn Vanderlaan, a teacher at the school and co-chair of the fair trade committee, said in order to receive this designation, the school had to complete an application. In it, McKay included lesson descriptions, pictures and videos, and also its plans to continue cultivating fair

trade knowledge and ideas throughout the school.

"When the news arrived, we were stunned," Vanderlaan said of when the approval came in. "Especially when we were told that our application was the most detailed and comprehensive one they'd ever received."

Fellow teacher and chair Amber Christie said it has been a combined effort of the staff and the students, all of whom impressed her with their level of support.

The students, including her own Grade 6/7 French immersion class, were asked to take on extra work to help make this happen, but Christie said they were happy to do it.

"(These are) all big responsibilities for elementary school students," she said. "But they approached each challenge with enthusiasm and they never cease to amaze me."

Continued on next page

LOCAL NEWS

McKay first fair trade school in province

From previous page

"They rallied with me and they were the ones whose curiosity originally inspired me to explore what we can do with this as a school."

The students on the fair trade committee were in charge of manning a table of fair trade goodies outside of the principal's office after the presentation. They handed out coffee, muffins, bananas and, of course, celebratory cake.

Megan Bartley, a Grade 7 French immersion student, was one of the youths at the table. She said it's been really fun and interesting to learn about fair trade.

Classmate Brenna Bohun, also helping out at the table, said learning about fair trade makes people strong and it's cool to see how the com-

munity has been reacting to their efforts.

District School Board of Niagara trustee for Fort Erie and Port Colborne, David Schaubel congratulated students and told them they should feel proud of their efforts. He said the school board should "take cues" and learn from what they've done to become better leaders for them.

Vance Badawey, who was mayor when Port Colborne became the first fair trade town in 2009, described the students and their efforts as inspiring.

"They're inspiring their peers to not only become a fair trade school and/or city, but also just simply to be thinking about what fair trade's all about," said Badawey, now M.P.

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LOCAL NEWS

Niagara women talk about life-saving transplant once the focus of a widespread plea for a donor

From Page 2

Leanne felt moved to help. Jane, 55, is mom to twin 13-year-old girls, Sabrina and Violet. Leanne is a mom, too.

Her son, Joe is 18, and Julia is 16. And she couldn't bear the possibility that Jane might not be around to see her children grow up.

She thought about giving part of her own liver. And asked herself: "Why couldn't I do that?" And when her husband, Chris, came home for lunch

that day, she gauged her idea with a statement that was meant more as a question: "I think I'm going to donate a liver to someone."

"Yeah, sure," he responded. There was no hesitation.

Then after some more heart-to-heart discussions with her family, she decided to give it a go.

"It was just meant to be," says Leanne. Her reasons are both simple and complicated, and hard to put into words. "I was looking for a purpose," she says. Not that her life didn't have meaning, but she was looking for something more. "And then this came along. And I thought, 'I think this is what I need to be doing.'"

She contacted Jane, and they met. Jane sat wrapped in a heated blanket, in an armchair in the livingroom of her St. Catharines home, and talked to Leanne.

"I told her the truth about the surgery," she said. "I had to tell her the dark side."

She did not want a potential donor to start the application process, that would eventually lead to both physical and psychological testing, without knowing some of the risks.

Jane was diagnosed with liver cirrhosis last July. She was put on the Trillium Gift of Life's wait list for a transplant from a deceased donor, but was told her best chance would be to find a living donor.

During living donor surgery, the right lobe of the donor's liver is removed and transplanted into the patient. Within a few months, the donor's liver grows back to much of its original size.

In Ontario, there are currently 225 people waiting for a liver.

According to the Canadian Liver Foundation, a living donor operation is major surgery that requires hospitalization of up to 10 days, and up to three months of recovery, although the risk of death is low.

"That day, Leanne drove away knowing it was the right thing to do."

"I just knew it was going to be OK," she says.

In all, there were some 20 people who contacted the Villeneuves about donating a liver. There was the newspaper story, a crowd-sourcing campaign, relatives who stepped forward and Facebook posts. Jane's husband, Wayne, made a bumper sticker for his car: Mother of twins needs a liver. Blood type O. If you can help, please call.

The couple was in the parking lot near

LIVING LIVER DONATION

For information on living liver donations, visit www.giftoflife.on.ca/en/transplant.htm

ORGAN DONATION

For information on being a donor, visit <https://beadonor.ca>

the Mark's clothing store on Fourth Avenue one day, when a man stopped to ask if he could photograph the bumper sticker. He shared it through social media.

On another occasion, the couple was driving in Toronto, when a man pulled up beside them. He handed Wayne his business card, with instructions to text him the information about Jane, and he'd share it through his social connections.

The community, too, stepped up to raise funds for the couple, who were both on a leave from their workplaces. Money was raised, food was brought to their house, and people offered their help by cleaning their house, and driving the girls to appointments and activities. All so Wayne and Jane could focus on finding a donor.

In the end, it was Leanne who was the best match.

The most difficult part was reassuring her children, and family that she would be OK.

Jane's resolve never wavered either. In January, moments before she was wheeled into the operating room at Toronto General Hospital, she shared a moment of raw emotion with Wayne.

"I'm going in with my boxing gloves," she told him, through tears. "And I'm coming out."

Jane calls Leanne her a hero. But Leanne, shrugs off the word with humility. The experience has been good for her, too, she insists.

"I appreciate life," she says. "I'm lucky to be able to do that. I'm blessed with that."

"There's a little spot inside me that's filled," she says.

"It just feels good on the inside to help someone."

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Splash 'N Boots have released nine award winning CDs, and three full-length DVDs. The cutting-edge duo have been nominated in 2014 and 2015 for Children's Album of the Year at the JUNO Awards, and were crowned Canadian Children's Music Group of the Year three times at the Sirius XM Independent Music Awards.

Splash 'N Boots have toured across Canada as the stars of Treehouse TV's Roll Play LIVE. In 2014, and 2015 they filled the massive Molson Amphitheatre for Treehouse televised performances alongside world renowned children's entertainers, The Wiggles.



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The Power of Pushing a Pedal

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Heather Ogilvie knows the power of pushing a pedal. It not only gets her closer to the finish line of OneFoundation for Niagara Health System's (NHS) Big Move Cancer Ride, it supports treatment for cancer patients at the NHS's Walker Family Cancer Centre. Ogilvie knows first-hand as a radiation therapist how much the charity bike ride helps those who come through the Cancer Centre's door — patients and their families

in the non-competitive event were even more personal. Her mother, Gail, was diagnosed with breast cancer for the second time, and she would receive treatment at the Cancer Centre.

"It's become that much more important to support the facility because everyone has been really good to her," Ogilvie says. "My motivation comes from all the patients I see but also because it hits close to home."

Ogilvie will ride 100 kilometres at the eighth edition of the Big Move Cancer Ride on Sunday, Sept. 11. She's been building up to it since accidentally missing



The Bikefit Sunflowers are regular participants in the Big Move Cancer Ride



Heather Ogilvie (left) rides in the 2015 Big Move Cancer Ride alongside fellow Radiation Therapist, Alexis Millhiser

alike. So it didn't take much convincing to get on her bike four years ago and raise money for the cause. Last year, though, her reasons for pedalling 60 kilometres

a turn her first year and riding 32 kilometres instead of the 25 she signed up for.

But no one should be daunted by that distance. With 25 and 50-kilometre courses,

the Big Move Cancer Ride is really about having fun, says Kristina Manzi, the OneFoundation's interim Director of Operations.

"It's a ride, not a race," she assures.

So far, 160 people have signed up, committing to raise a minimum \$500 in the process. All money stays in Niagara, where more than 33,000 radiation treatments have been completed since the Walker Family Cancer Centre opened in 2013.

Manzi hopes 500 people will strap on bike helmets come ride day. Because it's not a competitive event, cyclists 12 years of age and older can participate. They can prepare for the Big Move at weekly training rides held Thursdays at 6 p.m. at the Rockway Community Centre.

Fundraising also doesn't have to be an exercise in spinning your wheels. Riders have hosted garage sales, sold homemade dog treats, shaved their head, or simply put a collection jar in a busy spot to make their fundraising goals. Ogilvie's hockey league holds a bottle drive to help her reach \$500 in pledges.

Forming a team of riders also helps, even if everyone cycles a different route on ride day.

"We have some really strong fundraisers," Manzi says. "The teams have a really unique way to help because it's gets everyone (on the team) motivated."

Much like Ogilvie's own reasons for riding have changed, so has the meaning of the event. Before the Cancer Centre opened, the theme was One Pedal at a

Time, with a focus on building the centre so patients wouldn't have to travel to Hamilton for radiation.

This year's theme is Inspired to Ride. Reasons to participate abound, Manzi notes, be it honouring a loved one's memory, celebrating a recovery, or because the \$2.8 million raised so far has been used to buy tools to assist treatment.

"It's tough to find people around here who haven't been touched by cancer in some way," Manzi says. "I've been (organizing this event) for eight years and ... you get to see the spirit of why people participate in this. It's really an emotional day on top of a fun ride."

Visit bigmovecancerride.com to learn more and register.



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Dealing with Brexit pain, the day after

DON FRASER

Postmedia Network

Take a deep breath, pull it together.

Europe — Indeed the world — has changed with a UK vote to leave the European Union.

But many variables are at play as things unfold, said Brock political science associate professor Blayne Haggart.

"Hopefully, everyone will take the weekend, blow into a paper bag and consider things," said Haggart. "Certainly, things that we thought would not be in play, are now in play. Even the future of the E.U.

itself and the United Kingdom."

Haggart also spoke to the enduring power of nationalism as revealed by the vote.

"It is still the driving force behind human behaviour in the world," he said. "And it appeals to economic self-interest can't alone carry the day in these kinds of things."

He also points to the 1995 referendum in Canada, where voters in Quebec narrowly decided not to separate.

Haggart suggests a tipping point there was the appeal to a "Canadianism that united everybody, and not the economic necessity of a

union.

Many in the U.K. felt no attachment at all to the E.U., prior to their vote.

"Who would have thought ... Canada would be a model of stability in pretty much every single way, compared to something like the E.U.," he said.

This, as the fallout has begun following last Thursday's stunning win by the "leave" forces in the U.K.

The value of the pound plummeted last Friday, while stock markets tanked worldwide.

The very stability of the U.K. is also in question, given sharp



MARKUS SCHREINER/ASSOCIATED PRESS

divides highlighted by the plebiscite. Young voters overwhelmingly wanted to be part of the E.U., older citizens not.

Scotland, London and Northern Ireland wanted in, but much of the rest of Great Britain wanted to leave.

Scotland's first minister Nicola Sturgeon said it's "democratically unacceptable" Scotland could leave the EU against its will.

Sturgeon has said the required legislation to enable a new independence referendum will be prepared, to take place "if and when Parliament so decides."

Scotland voted in favour of the U.K. staying in the EU by 62% to 38%.

The U.K. as a whole has voted to leave, by a margin of 52% to 48%. That prompted U.K. Prime Minister David Cameron to announce he'd be leaving as PM in October.

And what of the economic blowback to Canada as the dust settles?

According to Bloomberg News, the U.K. was Canada's fifth-largest trading partner last year, accounting for about \$21.2 billion in total trade.

But this compared with more than \$540 billion in cross-border commerce with the U.S., Canada's largest partner by far, said the Bloomberg item as reported in the National Post.

Paul Shelestowsky, the Niagara-based senior wealth advisor for Meridian also notes that the U.K. is a bit player in Canadian trade — about 2.5 per cent. In the U.S., that trade accounts for roughly three per cent.

"In North America in general, the consensus is the impact will be minimal," Shelestowsky said.

Meanwhile, Shelestowsky said he's also heard from fund managers about cash holdings in sensitive portfolios being ramped up in anticipation of a leave vote.

"Believe it or not, this is actually going to turn out to be a very good buying opportunity for these fund managers," he added.

"They are buying cheap stocks. When there is a downturn this is how good fund managers separate themselves from average fund managers. They're prepared for it."

"There is no doubt the U.K. is going to be in for a very rough ride," Shelestowsky said. "The majority of economists believe the U.K. is going to be underperforming, possibly going into a recession."

"We're not immune," said Shelestowsky. "But a lot of what we're seeing in North America I believe is short-term knee-jerk reaction, whereas in Europe, it's going to be more drawn out pain."

Mishka Balsom, president/CEO of the Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce, believes the economic impact is unclear.

"In the short-term, the referendum result is having an impact on currencies, commodities and stocks," Balsom said. "Uncertainty never bodes well for financial markets — businesses prefer price stability."

"Brexit could stall the implementation of Canada's trade pact with the EU or Canada's trading with the U.K.," she added.

"In addition, both Britain's and Europe's economies are expected to slow down, which could create a lower demand for Canada's oil and commodities."

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LOCAL NEWS

Bankrupt food fest leaves sour taste

ALLAN BENNER
Postmedia Network

There won't be a Niagara Food Festival this year — or ever again.

Despite the efforts of the organization's board members, the \$80,000 in losses incurred at last year's rained-out event from Sept. 11 to 13 proved to be insurmountable.

Peninsula's Tastiest Party, which ran the Niagara Food Festival, declared bankruptcy May 31, after 22 years of filling Welland's downtown with hundreds of food vendors, entertainers, exhibitors, and thousands of guests for the annual fall event.

Board members contacted last Friday said they were unable to comment, referring inquiries to the organization's bankruptcy trustee MNP Ltd. Messages left with the trustee were not returned, last Friday.

Speaking anonymously, however, a festival representative said the board members "tried everything."

"We sold almost all of our assets, and unfortunately it still wasn't enough to satisfy the creditors."

The board approached city council for help at its Nov. 17 meeting, asking for a loan to bail them out. City councillors, however, narrowly voted against providing an \$80,000 interest-free loan to the festival.

"With the city unwilling to help we really didn't have anywhere else to turn," the festival representative said.

Festival organizers also reached out

to the community hoping people would pitch in with donations to help cover the losses, but the efforts garnered less than \$100.

Within the past few weeks, the festival's website, Facebook page and a Go Fund Me account were all taken offline.

"It's absolutely heartbreaking," the festival representative said. "The hope is that as much as there won't be a 2016 festival, that someone will possibly champion it for 2017 and bring it back as Taste of Niagara or something sort of similar."

Dolores Bajold Wright, chair of the Downtown Business Improvement Area, said the bankruptcy was "unfortunate," but not unexpected considering the size of the organization's debt.

"Earlier this year I understood they were having difficulties and they were a pretty insurmountable challenge," she said. "For any not for profit, that (\$80,000) is quite a monetary challenge."

Considering the number of people the event brought to the downtown in its heyday, she said the loss of the event will likely be disappointing to BIA members.

"It's just sad," she said. Bajold Wright said the BIA was not approached for assistance, adding it would be beyond the BIA's normal mandate.

"That would not have been a decision the board could make without a referendum," she added.

Despite the disappointment about the food festival, Bajold Wright pointed out that a similar downtown event has just begun.

The Welland Supper Market took place last Thursday — the first in a series of weekly mini-food festivals taking place on Merritt Island, throughout the summer.

"What a gorgeous night," said Bajold Wright, adding the BIA partnered with Silvernuth Brewing from Niagara-on-the-Lake to organize the event.

Although she was happy with the turnout and pleased with the event, she agreed that it was not a replacement for the food festival

when it was at its peak.

Nevertheless, she said the new event "gives Welland's another good reason to come to the downtown" while showcasing "the gem we have in Merritt Park."

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